

GEN. PHILLIPS

Pentagon Doesn't Challenge Khrushchev Boast of Missile With Hydrogen-Bomb Warhead

'No Reason to Question Accuracy' of Statement, Says Air Force Secretary Quarles—Russians Made Good on Previous Claims in Arms Race.

By BRIG. GEN. THOMAS R. PHILLIPS, U.S.A. (Ret.)

CPYRIGHT Military Analyst of the Post-Dispatch.

WASHINGTON, April 24.

SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE DONALD A. QUARLES, questioned at a press conference yesterday about Soviet Communist Party Chief Nikita Khrushchev's boast that the Soviet Union "will have a guided missile with a hydrogen-bomb warhead that can fall anywhere in the world," said that he "had no reason to question the accuracy" of the Russian's statement.

This is general attitude in the Pentagon toward Khrushchev's boast. It is recalled that Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov in 1948 boasted that the secret of the atom bomb was in the possession of the Russians and the next year the Soviet Union exploded its first atom bomb, four years before American estimates deemed that it would be possible.

Former Premier Georgi Malenkov announced in July, 1953, that the Soviet Union had the hydrogen bomb secret. The Russians' nuclear weapon was fired in August, a few days later.

Long Range Missile Boasts.

At the twentieth party Congress in Moscow in February, Khrushchev, Premier Nikolai Bulganin and Marshal Zhukov each boasted at Soviet long range missiles. They were not precise as to range, but implied that Soviet missiles could reach the United States.

Inasmuch as the Russians have in the past made good such boasts, there is no disposition here to doubt that they are well on the road to development of an intercontinental missile with a hydrogen warhead.

Khrushchev also claimed that the Russians had exploded an H-bomb in an air drop and called attention to the fact that the United States had not yet done so. This statement is true. It is expected that the United States will explode an H-bomb by air drop at the forthcoming tests in May.

The Russians also claim to be superior to the United States in the production of atomic and hydrogen weapons. Gen. Sergei Zhatillov, in a broadcast Feb. 2, 1955, declared: "We have in our country atomic and hydrogen weapons, the production of which, as is well known, has surpassed that of the Americans."

Varied Reaction.

The reaction in Washington as to the significance of Khrushchev's boast varied. Quarles maintained, as he had before Congress earlier, that for the next five to 10 years delivery of bombs by manned bombers would remain the more effective means.

For this reason, Quarles did not see the Soviet leader's statement as indicating any material change in the international situation.

Senator Stuart Symington (Dem.), Missouri, took a much more serious view. He called it a "significant and terrible warning to the American people and the world" if true.

If the statement is true, it does indicate that the Soviet Union is at least five years ahead of the United States in the development of long-range ballistic missiles.

Some officials in the Pentagon were inclined to discount Khrushchev's statement. They admit that it probably is possible to fire a missile 5000 miles if every effort is concentrated merely on distance.

The necessary rocket motors have been developed to give a two- or three-stage missile the necessary push. But this is quite different from landing it within 100 or within 500 miles of the target. The problem of re-entry into the

atmosphere, without having the warhead burn up like a meteor, has been solved.

"Sure," they say, "it probably can fall anywhere in the world. If aimed at Spain, it might fall on the Canary Islands."

'Little Bit on High Side.'

(The United Press reporter Central Intelligence Director Allen Dulles suggested today that Khrushchev was exaggerating in claiming Russia "quickly" will have an H-bomb missile.)

(Commenting on Khrushchev's claim, Dulles told reporters: "I don't think he is giving to minimizing things.

("I think what he had to say is a little bit on the high side.")

Khrushchev did not indicate what kind of a missile he was talking about—a ballistic missile or an air-breathing unmanned aircraft. The United States' air-breathing missile, the Snark, has a range of 5000 miles, but the United States has not done much boasting about it. The problem of accuracy has not been solved.

The United States, after serious delays and neglect, is now going all-out to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile. The Atlas has been under development for some time by Convair. A second contractor, Martin, is now at work on the airframe of another, 5000-mile missile—the Titan.

The missile program finally is adequately financed. Even the enthusiastic Trevor Gardner, recently resigned as Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for research and development agreed that the missile program had enough money.

Each of the United States projects for long-range missiles has four major contractors working along different lines. The division of work is one contractor for the frame, one for propulsion, one for guidance and one for nose cone re-entry into the atmosphere.

Guidance, Nose Cone Problems.

Guidance and nose cone re-entry are the critical problems remaining to be solved. The long-range missile will rise 600 miles above the earth and re-enter the atmosphere at a speed of from 15,000 to 18,000 miles an hour.

As it hits the atmosphere it probably will squash, like a bullet fired in water, its trajectory will flatten out and where it may land, or if it will burn up before landing are unresolved problems. The heat from friction with the atmosphere will reach 30,000 degrees in seconds.

Defense officials who realize all of the problems involved are confident that while the Soviet Union may have a long-range missile, they do not have one with sufficient accuracy to make the bomber obsolete today and thus to change the military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The story is quite different for missiles such as might be fired

from the Soviet Union against France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy. United States scientists have solved the various problems for a missile of such range. None of them involve the extreme difficulties of guidance and re-entry of the intercontinental missile.

Implied Threat.

How the Russians might use possession of an intermediate missile with a hydrogen warhead is indicated by the implied threat against Britain in the Khrushchev remark. It was stated even more directly in regard to Italy over the Moscow radio on Feb. 11, 1955. The speaker said "10 thermonuclear bombs of the latest type would be sufficient to destroy the whole of Italy."

With an intermediate missile, the Russians could spread this sort of fear to all Europe.

The United States is proceeding along two distinct lines to develop a 1500-mile missile. One project under the Army and Navy combined is going forward at Redstone Arsenal, where the Army with the help of German scientists has developed the highly satisfactory Redstone missile with a range admitted to be 200 miles, but probably in actuality about 600.

The Redstone project will work to increase the range of its perfected missile, probably by making it in two stages, to from 1500 to 2000 miles.

Of Minor Significance.

The fact that the United States has not exploded a hydrogen bomb by air drop is of minor significance. It is difficult enough to take all the readings and gain the information about what happens in an explosion made on the ground or on a tower. The instruments are destroyed in a millionth of a second and must report electrically the information they gain before destruction.

In an air drop, all this complex instrumentation must be dispensed with. Rockets are fired up into the cloud to gain what information they can. Aircraft at safe distances also try to pick up heat and radiation readings.

Information gained from complete instrumentation in previous tests is what now enables the scientists accurately to make bombs of the size and effect they want, whether it is to design a city buster that explodes with the force of 40,000,000 tons of TNT and destroys everything within a radius of 30 miles, or a little city buster equal to 1,000,000 tons of TNT that would only make a desert within a radius of four or five miles.

Whatever effect Khrushchev's boast has, it unquestionably will call attention to the need to end the threat to the existence of mankind that is posed by thermonuclear weapons.

By the Associated Press.

In further comment on Khrushchev's H-bomb missile assertion, Quarles said, "It all depends on the Russian's definition of 'soon' or a 'short time.'"

"It probably comes down to translating the Russian," Quarles said.

The Secretary insisted that "we are technically ahead of the Soviets" in the development of guided missiles and that the United States is "putting top priority on the development of such weapons."

Takes Issue With Quarles.

(The United Press said Senator Henry M. Jackson (Dem.), Washington, took issue with Quarles's assertion, terming it "a dangerous assumption to make."

(Jackson said Quarles does not answer the question whether Russia is ahead in certain specific fields, such as a ballistic missile with a 1500-mile range.

(Jackson has predicted that Russia will test fire such an intermediate range ballistic missile this year. Thus far, he told reporters today, "no one in a position of authority in the administration has ever denied that Soviet Russia is ahead" in development of an intermediate range ballistic missile.)

Speaking subsequently to a Michigan Aero Club dinner honoring Roger M. Kyes, a General Motors Corp. vice-president and a former deputy secretary of defense, Quarles said that in this atomic age "treacherous evasion" of any disarmament agreement might be hard to discover, or if discovered, to counter.

While all efforts to ease world tensions and bring about a situation that permits disarmament must be continued, he said, "we must recognize that the dangers in such a course are enormously greater than in the pre-atomic age."

He also said in his speech:

"Treachery can now pay an unprecedented premium to those who practice it against disarmament agreements."

He supported President Eisenhower's proposal of aerial surveillance to insure the carrying out of any disarmament agreement. The President's proposal was made at the "summit" meeting of the great powers at Geneva last summer.

Kyes, deputy secretary of defense from January 1953 to May 1954, was presented the Air Force Exceptional Service Award, its highest civilian decoration.

As concerns applying a thermonuclear warhead, this is considered the least difficult of the problems. Even the short-range Redstone, with a diameter of between five and six feet, is large enough to carry a thermonuclear warhead.

Indicates U.S. Is Behind.

Khrushchev made a point of the fact that the United States had not dropped a hydrogen bomb from the air. He indicated by this that the United States was behind in weapons development and that we had only exploded a thermonuclear installation.

It is, unfortunately, true that the Soviet thermonuclear bomb exploded in August, 1953, was of a composition that made it suitable for weapon use. The earlier United States thermonuclear explosions were on the development track that had been given up. The United States hydrogen bombs exploded in March 1954 were of a usable type for weapons and the same composition in general as the Russian bomb exploded earlier. Thus the Russians were seven months ahead of the United States in developing a usable thermonuclear weapon.

According to Japanese scientists who examined the atmospheric debris from both explosions, the Russian and United States bombs were three-phase affairs. The core was an atom bomb which provided the necessary heat of hundreds of millions of degrees to start the thermonuclear reaction. The thermonuclear explosion released free neutrons which in turn made the uranium case of the bomb fission in a stupendous explosion that created such large amounts of the dread radioactive fallout.

A report from the same Japanese scientists said that the latest Soviet thermonuclear explosion apparently was of a bomb with a thorium case which fissioned. Thorium is much more plentiful than uranium in the earth's surface and hence can be used to make a cheaper bomb.